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Messages from Hyderabad: Comments from the UK representatives  
who attended the Hyderabad Internet  
Governance Forum, December 2008



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# Views from Hyderabad

Emily Taylor

Director of Legal and Policy, Nominet

The third Internet Governance Forum hosted in Hyderabad, India in December 2008 was well attended, showing international solidarity for the Indian hosts in response to the tragic events in Mumbai. As in previous years, the UK had a strong presence at the forum and the active participation of four leading MPs was a real asset for the discussions. Representatives from government, business and civil society were able to share their views with other stakeholders from around the world – and did so to good effect.

The IGF agenda was – again – very wide ranging. But, for me, there were a number of real highlights.

- As in Rio, the UK organised a best practice workshop, where the British MPs presented national initiatives in education, child protection and crime reduction. The CBI looked at how industry is addressing its responsibilities for self-regulation. And I was able to share the successes that came from the Best Practice Challenge.
- A number of other countries have taken the UK's lead with national or regional preparatory work to improve their engagement in the IGF. This is very encouraging. Nominet worked with the French Foreign Ministry to set up a workshop to compare different approaches: for me, I thought the East Africa IGF, where the four participating countries feed their national work into the regional discussion, was of particular interest. Is this a model we could copy in Europe?
- Child protection continued to have a high profile – and the leadership being shown by the Children's Charities' Coalition on

Internet Safety and the NSPCC is really helping to move the debate forward.

- The sensitive debate on critical Internet resources was firmly back on the agenda. I moderated a panel discussion on global, regional and national arrangements for managing the resources, which stimulated a lot of interest. In his summing up, Nitin Desai, the IGF Chairman, described the debate as, "tackled in a respectful and informed way." Those of you who remember the polarised views of the World Summit will recognise quite how the IGF has changed the way we approach the difficult issues of Internet governance.

The Nominet Best Practice Challenge stimulated a lot of interest and we distributed 400 copies of the brochure. It was good to meet the organisers of the Manthan Award – a sort of 'Best Practice Challenge' covering eight countries in South Asia. The scale of their initiative is amazing, with 264 nominations and 33 winners. But, apart from feeling a little humble, it is great to see this focus on sharing best practice. I think that there is a key job here for the IGF, in helping to share examples of achievements we can all learn from. Perhaps we spend too long looking at problems, rather than on the good things that are happening all around us? Certainly a continuing opportunity for us in the future!

In this booklet, we bring together the impressions and ideas that some of the other British participants took away from the meeting. I hope you enjoy reading the contributions: we hope that they will help others in the UK think about what they would like to see from the Internet Governance Forum – and then go and make it happen!

"The view is gathering strength worldwide that the Internet Governance Forum has created exciting and innovative opportunities for cooperation between stakeholders. Prior to the third IGF meeting in India in December, we consulted widely in the UK with industry, civil society and parliamentarians as well as government, on the issues to be discussed at Hyderabad. Security remains top of the agenda for the UK, with access and confidence the next. The Internet is a huge space where everyone grasps one corner of what is familiar to them. Most of us know that our knowledge is limited and our vision is partial, at best.

That is why we need the IGF – it overcomes such limitations and links us with others to address problems locally and nationally. Doing so on the world stage means we can share best practice and learn from each other.

At Rio in 2007, I made a commitment to the international community that the UK would demonstrate that the IGF approach works by establishing the UK IGF to support the international process. We now need to build on the successful partnership activity and the multi-stakeholder cooperation that already exists in the UK.

At Hyderabad, we were delighted to discover that several countries are taking a similar approach. National IGFs are being developed in several other countries including Australia, Germany and France. New regional structures include the European, East African, West African and Asian IGFs. There are also significant developments at the sub-national level. The Yorkshire & Humberside Business Crime Reduction Centre and the Wales e-Crime Forum are excellent examples of best practice and partnership.

Although the IGF is proving its worth, we need greater high level engagement from industry and support from other national governments similar to that already given by the UK government. Business in particular hasn't realised that if the IGF model is not supported and embraced we risk a return of proposals to regulate the Internet via a centralised bureaucratic UN agency, an approach which would be likely to constrict online innovation and business development. Nominet, Intellect and the CBI (as well as some major players such as CISCO) are already involved – but for others it seems like the penny is still waiting to drop.

Can we ensure that such examples of best practice are shared worldwide and that we learn from good examples in other countries? Is this an ambitious undertaking? Yes! That's a vision of how the Internet can be made a good and safe place to be, as well as being exciting, fast and ever-changing. Our partnership approach can make the UK the safest place to do business online."

Rt Hon Alun Michael, MP

"The Hyderabad IGF followed soon after the Mumbai bombings. So the four UK MPs was the largest national delegation to attend and we created quite a stir. We were well placed to ensure that progress in promoting best practice was given wider emphasis than arguments for 'Enhanced co-operation' which in the IGF has many differing interpretations some of which are too regulatory. We were able to point to efforts Nominet has made to demonstrate best practice schemes, particularly in one session where discussion of UK experience drew an appreciative audience from many different countries. We got across the benefits of multi-stakeholder working. I hope the IGF made a sufficient impact for the process to continue rather than Internet Governance becoming too institutionalised."

**Ian Taylor MBE, MP**

"If we work in partnership, the Internet and future technologies can be harnessed for the benefit of all. Doing nothing is unacceptable and trying to legislate for every eventuality is impossible. The skills and talents in industry, academia, civil society, the voluntary sector, government and parliament need to be brought together to address problems. We need to demonstrate to all users that by sharing the best ideas we can not only keep ahead of those who seek to harm us but create an Internet that is enriching and safe. That is why projects like the Nominet 'Best Practice Challenge' are so important. Furthermore, this approach is already helping to create a model that other countries are following and indeed developing to meet their own needs."

**Andrew Miller, MP**

"The IGF has become a key facilitator for identifying and addressing a broad range of Internet issues both globally and through local initiatives such as the UK IGF. It creates an opportunity for diverse groups to engage and work together.

Our primary focus is the impact which the escalation of e-crime and other distressing online incidents is having on Internet users. We were pleased, therefore, that one of the main themes of the IGF meeting in Hyderabad was 'Promoting Cyber-Security and Trust'.

At the meeting in December, the IGF recognised that the world economy, governments and civil society all rely on the Internet. It began identifying key areas of international collaboration needed to tackle e-crime and security.

Importantly, the Hyderabad meeting also acknowledged that although this was a global problem, there was a need for action at the local level. That is why the UK IGF is an essential contributor, not only in the context of tackling e-crime, but other important issues facing the Internet Community in the UK. And why organisations such as E-Victims.Org will continue to participate in the UK IGF."

**Jennifer Perry,  
The E-Victims Organisation**

"Rio was the first meeting of the IGF where those of us who are primarily concerned with the online child protection agenda attended in any numbers. It was very much a learning experience and in Hyderabad we started to harvest the fruits of that learning. There is no doubt that children's and young people's use of the Internet and related technologies is now centre stage within the IGF.

However, what also became clear at Hyderabad was that whilst the top layers of management and leadership within the IGF machinery are seized of the importance of the issue, there is still a widespread misunderstanding of the nature of the problem, and hence the solutions. In a plenary session I was asked by a platform speaker if I thought it was OK for young people to be able to access information on the Internet about sexual health?

I was staggered by the question, or more particularly by the assumptions that lay behind it. Am I in favour of young people being able to discover how to save their own and other people's lives or avoid significant illness? You bet I am, but the fact that it was asked did rather show that we still have a lot to do to reach out to the many different stakeholders within the IGF who, to be fair, have probably hitherto never had to give a lot of time to thinking about these issues. Sharm el-Sheikh beckons."

**John Carr,  
Children's Charities' Coalition on Internet Safety**



"The IGF meeting in Hyderabad was a turning point. Building on the Athens and Rio IGFs, we saw in Hyderabad the successful realisation of the multi-stakeholder vision. With a rich programme of workshops, panel discussions and main sessions, there was a visible commitment shared by many experts from government, industry, civil society and inter-governmental organisations to create platforms for getting people together to discuss the opportunities as well as the challenges for the Internet and its users. Most importantly, the IGF was the opportunity to share ideas, best practice and solutions. This must remain the fundamental aim for the IGF as a process: not to negotiate outcomes but to share experience and information, and to disseminate what works for all stakeholders.

The challenge now, as we approach the review of this process ahead of the UN General Assembly taking its decision next year on whether the IGF model should be maintained beyond 2010, is to capture and articulate the impacts of this forum. This means collating the evidence that all stakeholders – particularly those in a position to take decisions – are reflecting on what they heard in Hyderabad with a view to adopting or adapting those ideas, solutions and best practice. The evolution of national and regional Internet governance fora – many modelled on the UK IGF – will provide a key opportunity to do this. We in BERR, working with Nominet and the parliamentarians who contributed so much to steering some of the key discussions in Hyderabad, will contribute to efforts to realise both a European forum and a voice for the Commonwealth in the preparations for the next IGF in Sharm el-Sheikh in November."

**Mark Carvell, BERR**

"It is clear that we are witnessing the changing nature of net user relations. With over 1 billion PCs in use, more than 1.4 billion Internet users and a predicted 4 billion mobile users by the end of this year, the world is now a meshed global village. And best of all – the citizen is at the heart of all this! This is why the IGF is so important. National legislation won't work alone but our partnership approach is now a proven model, which other countries are seeking to emulate.

Once again, IGF team UK proved that an industry, third sector, civil service, and parliamentary team is the best way forward and means we punch well above our weight. My point that we must e-engage with the tech citizens of the future was well received that is why I am working to set up an e-participation pilot for the IGF to involve our young and those in Egypt, who will host this year's event, so they can have their say on where this new world is taking us."

**Margaret Moran, MP**



## Looking ahead

**Lesley Cowley**

Chief Executive, Nominet

**The UK IGF played an important role in preparing for Hyderabad: our goal must now be to build on this success and ensure strong British support for the next Internet Governance Forum in Sharm el-Sheikh in Egypt from 15-18 November 2009.**

While I think that we can be proud of what we – the UK – achieved in India, the job is far from done. So the preparation for the fourth IGF needs to be the top priority for the UK IGF.

The Nominet Best Practice Challenge is now an established feature of the UK's IGF preparations: I am delighted at the enthusiasm for the initiative and the quality of the applications. It is pleasing to see winners like Barclays Bank and the Internet Watch Foundation proudly announcing their success. I look forward to an even more exciting competition for 2009 – and the opportunity to showcase the winners in Egypt.

A number of other countries have set up national IGFs to support their increased effort in the IGF. This is great news – especially when so many of them point to the UK as their model. But this also increases our challenge to make the UK voice heard. We will only achieve this by showing leadership and having strong messages supported by good national multi-stakeholder dialogue.

Last year, Nominet sponsored the Parliament & Internet conference in October: that helped us to pull together informed views, and we would like to continue this partnership in the future.

I am grateful to the commitment and interest shown by British parliamentarians to the IGF process: their engagement has been crucial

in ensuring the visibility of the UK in the IGF. I hope that we will be able to count on this continued support as we prepare for Egypt.

What is clear, is the importance of increasing the engagement of other stakeholders in the process – the preparation for, and the involvement in, the international IGF itself. In the UK, we have some excellent organisations working on issues of direct relevance to the IGF agenda and who have real successes to showcase. These successes show why the UK is a great place for Internet innovation and leadership. I hope that, over the year, the number of partners taking the lead on issues of interest to them in the UK IGF will grow. It would be good to draw more of them into the discussion and help them to shape the agenda for the future.

The IGF had an initial mandate of five years so, with the fourth IGF in 2009, the process to assess the successes of the IGF is about to start. We need to be ready to contribute to this review: what have we learnt? What have we changed? How have we helped others to address specific concerns?

So a busy year in prospect! I am delighted with the development of the UK IGF as a partnership of thought leaders – and I thank you all for what we have achieved over the last year. I look forward to working with you for the success of the IGF.

